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SENATE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, On March 7, 1965, a group of civil rights marchers  
3 gathered at the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, Alabama, and  
4 their efforts to advance equal voting rights brought a brutal  
5 and bloody response; 8 days later President Johnson called for  
6 a comprehensive and effective voting rights bill to guarantee  
7 to our citizens the rights contained in the 14th and 15th  
8 Amendments to the United States Constitution; a bipartisan  
9 Congress approved landmark legislation, and on August 6, 1965,  
10 President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law; and

11           WHEREAS, Considered one of the most successful pieces of  
12 civil rights legislation ever adopted, the Act bans literacy  
13 tests and poll taxes, outlaws intimidation during the electoral  
14 process, authorizes federal election monitors and observers,  
15 and creates various means for protecting and enforcing racial  
16 and language minority voting rights; the Act was amended in  
17 1975 to facilitate equal political opportunity for language  
18 minority citizens and in 1982 to protect the rights of voters  
19 with disabilities; and

20           WHEREAS, Despite noteworthy progress from 40 years of  
21 enforcement of the Act, voter inequities, disparities, and  
22 obstacles still remain for many minority voters; and

23           WHEREAS, Section 5 of the Act is scheduled to expire in  
24 2007; this Section contains a special enforcement provision  
25 targeted at those areas of the country where Congress believes  
26 the potential for discrimination to be high and prohibits any  
27 change affecting voters until the Attorney General has  
28 determined that the change will not worsen the ability of  
29 minority voters to vote; Sections 4(f) and 203 will also expire  
30 in 2007; these Sections require bilingual voting assistance for  
31 language minority communities in certain jurisdictions; the  
32 language minority provisions apply to 4 language minority

1 groups: American Indians, Asian Americans, Alaskan natives,  
2 and persons of Spanish heritage; and

3 WHEREAS, The Voting Rights Act is a critical link in the  
4 struggle to enfranchise the politically marginalized; without  
5 reauthorization of these special provisions of the Act, America  
6 risks a resurgence of voter discrimination; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL  
8 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that the Senate memorializes  
9 the Congress of the United States to extend these critical  
10 provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be presented to  
12 the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, the  
13 Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each  
14 member of the Illinois congressional delegation.